

SENATE BILL 562

By Tate

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 4-3-733 and Title 49, Chapter 7, relative to the Tennessee HBCU consortium.

WHEREAS, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have made historic and ongoing contributions to the general welfare and prosperity of our country; and

WHEREAS, America's HBCUs, for over one hundred fifty years, have produced leaders in business, government, academia, and the military and have provided generations of men and women with hope and educational opportunity; and

WHEREAS, 105 HBCUs are located in 20 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands and serve more than 300,000 undergraduate and graduate students; and

WHEREAS, these institutions continue to be important engines of economic growth and community service, and they are proven ladders of intergenerational advancement for men and women of all ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds, especially African Americans; and

WHEREAS, these institutions also produce a high number of baccalaureate recipients who go on to assume leadership and service roles in their communities and who successfully complete graduate and professional degree programs; and

WHEREAS, in February 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13532 to highlight excellence, innovation, and sustainability of HBCUs, using partnerships with federal agencies and departments and the private sector to sustain the important work of HBCUs; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 29, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) The "Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)" or "initiative," as used in this section, is created for the purpose of providing oversight to focus on ways to strengthen the capacity of historically black colleges and universities to provide the highest quality education, increase opportunities for these institutions to participate in and benefit from state programs, and ensure that Tennessee has the highest proportion of college graduates from HBCUs in the country. The initiative shall operate as a division of the consortium of historically black colleges and universities, pursuant to this part.

(b) The initiative shall work with state departments, agencies, and offices, the private sector, educational associations, philanthropic organizations, and other partners to increase the capacity of HBCUs to provide the highest quality education to a greater number of students, and to utilize these institutions to serve the state's needs through five (5) core tasks:

(1) Strengthening the capacity of HBCUs to participate in state programs;

(2) Fostering enduring private-sector initiatives and public-private partnerships while promoting specific areas and centers of academic research and programmatic excellence throughout all HBCUs;

(3) Improving the availability, dissemination, and quality of information concerning HBCUs to inform public policy and practice;

(4) Sharing administrative and programmatic practices within the consortium for the benefit of all; and

(5) Exploring new ways of improving the relationship between the state and HBCUs.

(c)

(1) The consortium is authorized and directed to provide appropriate guidance and assistance to facilitate strategy development and coordinated

implementation by the initiative and the partnership to accomplish initiative tasks pursuant to subsection (b).

(2) In furtherance of subdivision (c)(1), the consortium may enter into one (1) or more memoranda of cooperation with the initiative and the partnership on terms deemed by the consortium to be appropriate, mutually beneficial, and in the best interest of the consortium and the partnership.

(d) Each executive branch department and agency is encouraged to create an annual plan of its efforts to strengthen the capacity of HBCUs through increased participation in appropriate federal programs and initiatives. Where appropriate, each agency plan shall address, among other things, the agency's proposed efforts to:

(1) Establish how the department or agency intends to increase the capacity of HBCUs to compete effectively for grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements and to encourage HBCUs to participate in state programs;

(2) Identify state programs and initiatives in which HBCUs may be either underserved or underused as national resources, and improve HBCUs' participation therein; and

(3) Encourage public-sector, private-sector, and community involvement to improve the overall capacity of HBCUs.

(e) If a department or agency creates an annual plan pursuant to subsection (d), then the department or agency shall:

(1) Provide appropriate measurable objectives and, after the first year, annually assess that department's or agency's performance on the goals set in the previous year's agency plan; and

(2) Provide a written summary of the objectives and goals to the education committee of the senate and the education administration and

planning committee of the house of representatives within thirty (30) days of the annual assessment required in subdivision (e)(1).

(f) The initiative may establish a board of advisors to consist of no more than twenty-five (25) members appointed by the consortium. The board shall include representatives of a variety of sectors, including philanthropy, education, business, finance, entrepreneurship, innovation, and private foundations, as well as sitting HBCU presidents. The board may advise the consortium and the initiative in the following areas:

(1) Improving the identity, visibility, and distinctive capabilities and overall competitiveness of HBCUs;

(2) Engaging the philanthropic, business, government, military, homeland security, and education communities in a dialogue regarding new HBCU programs and initiatives;

(3) Improving the ability of HBCUs to remain fiscally secure institutions that can assist the state in reaching its educational goals;

(4) Elevating public awareness of HBCUs; and

(5) Encouraging public-private investments in HBCUs.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.